



News Release

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NPC Statement on IOM Evaluation of Potatoes in WIC Program

Today, the National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a report that is the first in a series to evaluate the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

The report recommended that USDA allow fresh white potatoes to be an eligible vegetable for purchase using the WIC Cash Value Voucher. This change reversed previous IOM recommendations based on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) and makes the fresh white potato recommendation in the WIC food packages consistent with the current 2010 DGA. The report noted that women and children in WIC are now consuming only 64 and 56 percent, respectively, of the amount of starchy vegetables recommended by the 2010 DGA.

Based on a review of consumption data from the 2007-2010 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, the committee highlighted the low intake by WIC participants of potassium and fiber, identified as nutrients of concern in both the 2005 and 2010 DGAs. The report highlighted the ability of white potatoes to provide these nutrients at low cost, consistent with other starchy vegetables with similar nutrient profiles already eligible for purchase with WIC Vouchers.

The National Potato Council applauds the review conducted by the IOM on the role of white potatoes in meeting the nutritional needs of WIC mothers and children. Fresh white potatoes allow WIC participants to affordably add fiber and potassium to their diets and increase the positive value of their vouchers.

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The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental, and trade issues. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level.